



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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New Visitor Center Parking Expected to Open in Time for Thanksgiving:

Phase I of Grand Canyon's South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan Nears Completion

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – Construction on Phase I of the improvements called for in Grand Canyon National Park's South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan (Transportation Plan) is nearing completion; and the new parking areas at Grand Canyon Visitor Center (Visitor Center) are expected to open in time for Thanksgiving.

In late April 2009, construction began on Phase I of the improvements outlined in the Transportation Plan. The Phase I improvements primarily address concerns with traffic congestion and significant parking shortages in and around Mather Point and the Visitor Center. These improvements include:

- realignment of the South Entrance Road to loop around the Visitor Center area to the south and west;
- three new visitor parking lots which will provide parking for up to 600 vehicles, including RVs; and
- a new parking lot which will provide parking for 40 commercial tour vehicles.

On September 11, the transition to the new South Entrance Road alignment was completed; and the new commercial tour vehicle parking lot at the Visitor Center was opened. Currently, paving, striping and signing of the three new visitor parking lots is underway. The National Park Service (NPS) expects to open these 600 new parking spaces in time for Thanksgiving. Revegetation, irrigation, fencing and miscellaneous clean-up work will continue into early December and will conclude the Phase I improvements.

Planning for Phase II of the improvements is already well underway; and the solicitation for the project was advertised on November 10, 2009. Phase II construction is expected to include:

- removing the old parking area and adjacent roadbed at Mather Point, which will complete the development of a vehicle-free visitor experience there;
- creating an informal amphitheater on the rim near Mather Point;
- creating mobility impaired access to Mather Point;

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- constructing additional restroom facilities at the Visitor Center's commercial tour parking lot;
- completing the shuttle transit hub at the Visitor Center; and
- constructing a shuttle stop, pedestrian improvements and picnic areas at Mather Point.

(A pre-proposal meeting for interested Phase II bidders will be held on November 18, 2009. To view the solicitation advertisement, go to www.fbo.gov, use reference #DTFH68-10-R-00001.)

Completion of the Phase II improvements is currently planned for October of 2010. Once the Phase II improvements are completed, the NPS will use an adaptive management program to closely monitor and evaluate vehicular traffic, parking use and shuttle bus ridership to determine if and when any future improvements as outlined in the park's Transportation Plan might be implemented.

The South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan, developed by the NPS in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, addresses the most pressing traffic, parking and visitor access issues in Grand Canyon Village. The plan addresses the need to improve visitor transportation facilities and services, such as parking and shuttle service; to make the most effective use of existing visitor facilities and services; and to reduce safety risks due to conflicts between pedestrians, parked vehicles and moving traffic near Mather Point and elsewhere in Grand Canyon Village.

Funding for Phase I and Phase II improvements is being made available through entrance fees collected under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Up-to-date information on this project is available on the park's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/cvip09.htm>. For additional information, you may call Vicky Stinson, Project Manager at 928-774-3026 or Shannan Marcak, Public Affairs Specialist at 928-638-7958.

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